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THE FUNCTIONS OF AN ACADEMY  
OF MEDICINE

*Address of the President\**

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ONCE a year, the President is expected to report to the Fellows concerning Academy activities during the preceding twelve months. In addition, if he so desires, he may indulge in a few casual remarks, preferably pertinent. My comments will be concerned with the functions of an Academy of Medicine. These will be considered first, by summarizing the program presently followed here; second, by looking at the organization and aims of comparable institutions elsewhere; and third, by taking a hasty glimpse into the future.

To give a detailed review of all that has transpired within these walls in 1957 would require an inordinate amount of time and be of little general interest. Accordingly, I have asked for brief statements from various members of the full-time staff and now present them.

SUMMARIZED REPORTS

*The Director*—Dr. Howard Reid Craig. During 1957, the Academy operated on the basis of a budget anticipating an income of \$632,700,

\* Delivered at the Annual Meeting of The New York Academy of Medicine, January 2, 1958.

an increase of \$38,500 or 6.48 per cent over 1956. This figure takes no cognizance of contributions made to the Academy during the year. Expenses budgeted for 1957 amounted to \$649,684, an increase of 5.16 per cent over 1956. Of this increase in costs, salaries were raised an average of 4.35 per cent over-all and supplies and materials increased 7.3 per cent. These figures do not seem out of line in view of the generally increased cost of living, services and materials. Although audited accounts, as of December 31, 1957, will not be available for some weeks, it is clear now that the Academy has operated well within its budget and will have closed the year 1957 in the black. However, unsettled world conditions and the unpredictable future of our national economy for 1958 dictate that there should be no sizeable financial expansion of Academy activities in 1958 and that we continue to operate in a conservative and economical manner.

It is important that we put our house in the best of order. To that end the President, on authorization of the Council, has appointed a committee to survey all of the functions and activities of the Academy. At the conclusion of this survey, the committee will make recommendations, to be approved and implemented by the Council, which should enable the Academy better to serve the medical profession and the community. This matter will be discussed in more detail by the President.

The only major construction during the year was the complete refurbishing of the department of photography at a cost slightly in excess of \$20,000. This included the installation of new developing apparatus, new plumbing and lighting, and certain structural changes in that area. These renovations will provide facilities for greater volume and improved quality of work in photographic reproduction.

*The Library*—Miss Gertrude L. Annan, Librarian. The Library reports with satisfaction that for the first time in several years attendance has increased. Statistics show an addition of almost 8 per cent over the 1956 record. A survey of readers during November indicates that the percentage of Fellows using the Library is more than twice that of the previous survey of 1947. It is also of interest to note that during that month we had visitors from 17 foreign countries.

The major problem facing the Library is the critical shortage of space which every large research library must solve in this day of

an overpowering flood of publications of all kinds. It is obvious that in a few years every inch of shelf space will be crowded. To meet this emergency the Library Committee invited several medical librarians of this area to meet and discuss the possibility of a cooperative venture, such as a depository collection to hold the least used volumes. This could mean an enormous saving of space and the added advantage of cooperative collecting in certain fields where duplication is expensive and unnecessary. More complete coverage of such important material as health reports would also be made possible.

To answer an obvious need a small brochure was issued, entitled "Your Library: What Every Fellow Should Know." It is the hope of the Committee that this will make the services of the Library more easily available to members of the Academy.

The Friends of the Rare Book Room continue to enrich our collection through their generosity. The most exciting single volume given by them in 1957 is a beautiful thirteenth century medical manuscript on vellum containing the texts of several outstanding authors of the middle ages. Another extraordinary gift came from Mr. Mortimer L. Neinken—a collection of nearly nine hundred Italian broadsides of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Over a thousand, of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, are to come in 1958. These official manifestoes all have to do with health problems, chiefly in relation to the epidemics which swept through the cities at that time. These unusual and valuable documents provide a primary source for historians.

*The Committee on Public Health*—Dr. Harry D. Kruse, Executive Secretary. The Committee on Public Health, having been informed that at present the majority of cases of viral hepatitis result from accidental infections from insufficiently sterilized instruments, looked into possible means of prevention. Specifications for sterilization were drawn up, and it was recommended that the Commissioner of Health undertake an educational program to inform medical personnel of the hazard and to urge them to take every precaution, particularly in the technique of blood transfusion.

At the request of the City Health Commissioner, the Committee studied the present widespread use of tranquilizing drugs. Evidence that it is a public health menace was found to be inconclusive, but the Committee suggested that the Sanitary Code be broadened so as to

accord with Federal Law with respect to prescription drugs and also to provide for control of the refilling of prescriptions.

A third problem submitted to this Committee was the need for minimum standards to be applied to medically directed psychiatric clinics. The Committee recommended that all such clinics be licensed by the state and it then specified standards of licensure and operation for them.

An *ad hoc* committee, representing the organizations carrying on blood activities in New York City, recognizing that an unsatisfactory situation exists, requested the Committee on Public Health to survey the procurement, distribution, and utilization of blood throughout New York City, and to recommend measures for improving the present status. With gratifying and remarkable cooperation, every agency except one provided data on its activities. Thus it was possible to account for 100 per cent of all the blood used and, probably, not less than 90 per cent of the blood collected in New York City during 1956.

On the basis of these data the Committee made 60 specific recommendations. It was the judgment of the Committee that it was necessary to develop a community interest in blood and to create a service dedicated to the public weal; and that to achieve that desirable position, the entire blood enterprise should be put under the aegis of an organization established on a community scale. In the existing framework the most workable proposal that would bring about a degree of centralization would be the formation of an organization representing all the existing enterprises and the centralization of parts of the operation. Thus, New York City could achieve many of the benefits of central direct management without sacrifice of its already-established individual agencies. Hence, the Committee's first recommendation was that all of the blood agencies in New York City which participated in the survey formally organize, on a permanent basis, a community body concerned with blood. The remaining recommendations, covering all aspects of blood activities, pertained to the functions and program of the community organization and its administrative and operational center, and the responsibilities of the individual agencies.

*The Committee on Medical Education*—Dr. Robert L. Craig, Executive Secretary. The following scientific programs were arranged:

1. Stated Meetings. In some instances these were planned in co-

operation with the various Sections, the Committee on Public Health and other organizations, such as the James Ewing Association.

2. Monthly Panel Meetings for the General Physician.

3. The Postgraduate Week. The topic this year was "Research Contributions to Clinical Practice". Both format and content represented continuing experimentation. The most marked change from previous years was the reduction in the total duration of the sessions from two weeks to one week. Fifteen lectures on varied subjects were given during a five-day period and a panel meeting was held each afternoon. The Scientific Exhibit was on display for two weeks. Excluding visitors to the Exhibit, the total attendance at the lecture and panel meetings was about the same as last year, namely 1,655 in 1956 and 1,680 in 1957.

The Bernard Sutro Oppenheimer Lectures, dealing with studies of the cardiovascular system and its disorders, were inaugurated. The first lecture was given by Dr. Dickinson W. Richards, Jr., who spoke on "Some Problems in the Physiology of Dyspnea". The second lecture will be given in April of this year by Dr. Gunnar Björck, of the University of Lund, Malmö, Sweden.

Under provisions of the Bowen-Brooks Fund, the Committee awarded one scholarship in the amount of \$4700 for study abroad for the academic year 1958-1959.

Three sub-committees are now engaged in assessing current Academy educational activities and drawing plans for future efforts in various areas of postgraduate medical education.

The Bureau of Medical Education has continued to answer many requests, from both the medical and lay public, for information on a great variety of subjects relating to this field.

*The Committee on Medical Information*—Dr. Iago Galdston, Executive Secretary. The Committee issued 40 press releases and reviewed 116 manuscripts submitted by 89 different publications in the United States. The Bureau and its consultants dealt with some 11,000 inquiries.

A pilot study was launched, having the title, "Whither Medicine". To carry this forward, grants totalling \$12,500 were obtained from the Commonwealth Fund and an anonymous donor. The material eventually will be published.

Under the aegis of the Committee three books appeared, namely,

*Medicine in a Changing Society, On the Utility of Medical History, and Freud and Contemporary Culture.* Two additional manuscripts have been prepared, representing the transactions of conferences.

The FM Program "For Doctors Only" has been continued. There have been two series, one in which the contributors were British, the other in which the speakers were French scientists.

The Eastern States Health Education Conference, held in April, was devoted to the subject, "The Family in Contemporary Society".

The calendar year saw the completion of the 22nd Series of "Lectures to the Laity" and the initiation of the 23rd Series. The latter is concerned with the theme, "Medical Progress in the Offing". The first talk in the new series was delivered by Dr. Hans Selye, of Montreal, who spoke on "The Stress of Life".

In cooperation with the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, arrangements have been completed for the Annual Meeting of the American Association for the History of Medicine. The Academy and the Institute are to serve as hosts to the Association.

*The Bulletin*—Dr. Robert L. Craig, Secretary and Editor. The Bulletin has continued to publish original articles which have been presented at various Academy functions as well as abstracts submitted by the Section on Microbiology and the New York Pathological Society. In addition, a number of transcripts of panel meetings have appeared.

The Bulletin is distributed to all Fellows of the Academy, to 1400 paid subscribers and to 350 Library exchanges.

*The Committee on Sections*—Dr. Robert L. Craig, Secretary. The twelve Sections of the Academy have continued their meetings though there is an increasing tendency to reduce the number held. On several occasions two or more Sections have combined to arrange the program of Stated Meetings. The average attendance at Section meetings increased during the past year by 30 per cent.

*The Committee on Admission*, under the chairmanship of Dr. Philip D. Wiedel, has worked faithfully to maintain the high standards of character and professional attainment required of those who seek to become Fellows.

*The Trustees*, with Dr. Orrin S. Wightman as Chairman, Dr. Shepard Krech as Treasurer and Mr. Arthur A. Eberle as Comptroller, are responsible for the sound financial position of the Academy, as indicated in the report of the Director.

It may fairly be said that the year has been one of fruitful activity.

#### CHARACTER AND GOALS OF SOME COMPARABLE ORGANIZATIONS

It seemed of interest and, perhaps profitable, to inquire into the activities of other organizations with aims similar to our own. To obtain the necessary information requests were sent to a number of executive directors for available reports, pamphlets and journals. These, together with some of the letters received in reply, comprise the background for comparison.

The institution which appears to resemble most closely the New York Academy is the *Royal Society of Medicine of London*. Founded in 1805, it is privately supported and is greatly aided, financially, by various pharmaceutical firms. The Society consists of nearly 10,000 Fellows, Members and Associates, both British and foreign, of whom 1,600 live overseas.

The Society has its own building in which the library is housed and scientific meetings are held. The proceedings of the meetings are published in a monthly Journal. An active photographic unit undertakes medical photography and cinematography. Non-residential club services are provided for those using the library and attending scientific meetings; a restaurant and common rooms are available.

The Society needs additional funds to enable it to extend its activities and, particularly, to increase the facilities of the library. It is hoped that financial assistance will make possible the establishment of a "Domus Medicus"—a Hall of Residence for foreign and provincial doctors who come for consultation and research. Support is desired also for the support of two-way visits between the Fellows and visitors from abroad. Discussions have been held concerning the formation of a Section of Industrial Medicine, in order to give to this subject an academic standing which, so far, it has not attained in England.

*The Institute of Medicine of Chicago*, incorporated in 1915, operates along lines similar to those followed here. It has no home of its own, however, and operates from offices in the John Crerar Library

Building. Membership is by invitation only and the present policy seems to indicate that the number of members will remain under 700, although there is no fixed limit.

Numerous committees are concerned with public health, with convalescent and chronic care, with medicolegal problems and grants for special projects. The Proceedings of meetings are published as a journal and there are endowed lectures, fellowships, prizes and research funds. There is close cooperation with the local Welfare Council; some 20 societies in the area are affiliates.

The Institute is privately endowed and supported. Its business affairs are managed by a Finance Committee composed in part of Citizen Fellows.

*The Academy of Medicine of Cincinnati* was organized in 1857. According to a letter from the Executive Secretary, its activities are carried on by four corporations. The Academy of Medicine is a non-profit corporation. The Cincinnati Journal of Medicine is a corporation for profit, the Physicians' Business Bureau is a corporation for profit and the Cincinnati Health Museum, a supplemental corporation to the Academy, is also a non-profit corporation. It maintains its own telephone service and publishes a two-page monthly newsletter called the Acadogram, as well as the Cincinnati Journal of Medicine and an annual directory of members. A council and 39 committees perform the usual functions of such an organization. The Academy does not have its own building or library. Its activities are combined with those of the Hamilton County Medical Society.

It is clear that, in structure and aims, there is wide variation in different localities. No additional information of special interest was obtained by further sampling, although material from numerous other sources was examined. It does appear, however, that almost all of the smaller organizations, some of which are designated as Academies, actually operate as county medical societies.

#### A GLIMPSE INTO THE FUTURE

The New York Academy of Medicine was founded in 1847. Its present functions, as defined by the Constitution, are "the advancement of the science and art of medicine, the maintenance of a public medical library and the promotion of public health and medical



education". These are praiseworthy aims, but the phrases used allow of broad interpretation. In other words, they are qualitative terms; as physicians and scientists we should be concerned with the quantitative approach.

Those of you who have read the *Bulletin* for October 1957 or the Grey Folder for November, are aware that all of the affairs of this Academy are now undergoing careful scrutiny. Adaptation to the modern medical climate may well require revision of viewpoint, of organization and of operational procedure, so that the goals set shall be achieved in the most economical and effective manner. To accomplish such a searching survey, eight subcommittees have been appointed, each with its own specific area to cover and each with its own chairman. The over-all chairman of the Survey Committee is Dr. William Barclay Parsons; he and the subcommittee chairmen constitute an Executive Group. A report at this time cannot contain final conclusions or recommendations, for the work is still actively in progress. Since last April, however, many spirited meetings have been held and, in the light of what has emerged from them, I will try to summarize the current status, with reference to each subcommittee.

*Administration:* Dr. Marcus D. Kogel, Chairman. This report will have to be integrated, in detail, with that of each of the other subcommittees, because administration involves every activity of the Academy. All department heads are being interviewed. One of the questions being considered is the advisability of engaging the services of a management concern to operate the building and handle its non-professional personnel. It seems likely that such an arrangement would cut costs.

*Building and Plant:* Dr. Condict W. Cutler, Jr., Chairman. Inspections of the entire establishment have been made with a view to improvements and economy of operation. Because of urgent need, the subcommittee already has made a specific recommendation which was promptly approved for immediate action by the Trustees at their December meeting. It was decided to remodel and redecorate the cafeteria on the fifth floor, and purchase new equipment. A contract has been signed with a reliable concessionaire, who will supervise the operation and will furnish food and staff. Work should begin

shortly. The same firm will serve Academy dinners and will arrange for bar service; we can buy and store our own liquor at a considerable saving. Funds for this entire undertaking are available.

*The Bulletin:* Dr. Louis J. Soffer, Chairman. Content, source of material, its character and quality, as well as business operations, are under discussion.

*Finance:* Dr. Henry N. Pratt, Chairman. Three laymen, Mr. Montgomery B. Angell, Mr. George N. Emory and Mr. Henry S. Sturgis, all experienced in the field of finance, are serving as members of this subcommittee and are reviewing the Academy's investment portfolio. It is probable that a recommendation will be made to employ a management consultant firm, Cresap, McCormick and Paget, to go over the internal financial operations. This firm helped materially with the Academy's recent Study of Blood Procurement, to which reference already has been made.

*The Library:* Dr. George Rosen, Chairman. Ours is one of the finest and largest medical libraries in the world and is well run. Is it overstaffed? Is the budget excessive or should its facilities be expanded? In what ways can service be improved? The establishment of a deposit library, to be operated in cooperation with other medical institutions in the city, is under consideration.

*Medical Education:* Dr. Dickinson W. Richards, Jr., Chairman. It is apparent that the present program of postgraduate education is not in keeping with the times and, more particularly, is not suited to the requirements of a large city in which there are six medical schools, each with affiliated teaching hospitals. The solution of the problem is not readily at hand. It has been suggested that there might be a three-pronged approach with appeal to research workers, to specialists and to general practitioners. The Section meetings must be better integrated with the general educational scheme.

*Medical Information:* Dr. John Garlock, Chairman. The deliberations of this subcommittee have not yet been divulged. It is known that the cost of the many projects sponsored by the Committee on Medical Information is being scrutinized.

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*Public Health:* Dr. Duncan W. Clark, Chairman. The report of this subcommittee is said to be almost complete. The Committee on Public Health has done outstanding work and it seems unlikely that any radical changes in its program will be suggested.

These fragmentary remarks cover all that can now be said. The Survey Committee, probably by next spring, will submit its findings and recommendations to the Council for discussion, approval and action. Those who are giving time and thought to this project are proceeding with enthusiasm and vigor. That the results of their labors will increase the usefulness of the Academy to its Fellows, to other physicians and to the general public, seems assured. Throughout the Survey, the initiative and help of the Director, Dr. Howard Reid Craig, have been invaluable. In this, as in every phase of Academy affairs, it is to him that all turn for guidance.

By way of conclusion, and at the risk of offending the more literal-minded, I shall venture a short excursion into the realm of metapsychical phenomena. A printer's error started this train of thought. On the first page of the Academy Bulletin for April 1957, the usual heading which, for decades, has read "Bulletin of The New York Academy of Medicine", appeared as "Bulletin of The *New* Academy of Medicine" (*italics mine*). By an odd coincidence, it was just at this time that the Survey, designed for modernization, was getting under way. Can this combination of circumstances be regarded as a good omen? Future developments will tell; but there is every reason to look forward with confidence.